1. **It is recommended that:**

1.1 Committee note the contents of this report.

2. **Reasons for recommendation:**

2.1 Following on from the South Parade report tabled at the Township meeting on the 9th March, Rochdale Township Committee requested further information on South Parade and an indication on the Highway arrangements after all the Town Centre works are complete.

3. **Alternatives and risks considered:**

3.1 None.

4. **Consultation undertaken/proposed:**

4.1 None.

5. **Main text of report:**

   **Background**

5.1 The ongoing development of Rochdale Town Centre involves a range of temporary traffic management measures to maintain safe traffic movements around the various developments within the town centre. These temporary arrangements during construction are in constant flux and it is understood to be outlined as part of a logistics study commissioned by the Rochdale Development Agency.
5.2 This report will focus on the operation of South Parade primarily and also outline the long term highway operation aspirations once all the town centre development is complete.

**Current and proposed development and their permanent highway influence**

5.3 When considering the rest of the Town Centre once the current proposed Town Centre development is complete in 2015. The following developments proposed and their effects on the highway are as follows;

5.4 Metrolink will enter the town centre along Maclure Road where a one way system will exist for vehicular traffic with Richard Street being one way south bound, and Maclure Road north bound. Metrolink will then progress onto Drake Street terminating at Smith Street. Vehicular access to Drake Street will be restricted making it one way for buses only from Smith Street to Water Street. Fleece Street and Faulkner Street will be closed at its junction with Drake Street. Traffic Signals will be introduced at the junction of Smith Street/ Drake Street/ South Parade/ Constantine Road/ Stationers Entry to manage the transport demands on this junction.

5.5 The new Municipal Offices located off Milton Street will ensure access and egress via Milton Street. Smith Street will be one way from Milton Street to Drake Street.

5.6 Subject to necessary funding approvals, the new bus station situated on the old Electric House and River Street car park site will create access and egress for bus service on Smith Street and Water Street. Taxi’s will also be able to access a proposed taxi rank at Faulkner Street.

5.7 The Town Centre East retail development on the existing Municipal Offices and Bus Station site will reduce traffic movement in the town centre by the removal of the Bus Station car park and closing Milton Street and Bailie Street to vehicular traffic and Penn Street to through traffic. These proposals will create new pedestrianised areas and improve pedestrian connections within the town centre.

5.8 In addition to these confirmed developments there is a proposal to restore Rochdale’s Medieval bridge at the bottom of Yorkshire Street. This work will require the realignment of the Esplanade and the guarantee that vehicles accessing Yorkshire Street for loading are able to exit via Bailie Street, Constantine Road and South Parade.

5.9 The proposed Wood Street Ring Road will create a link from Wood Street to Drake Street. The aspiration of the ring road is to manage traffic around the town centre better by improving east west vehicular movements and access to the south of the town centre.

5.11 The reconfiguration of traffic light timings along with improved signing will ensure the new ring road will relieve traffic congestion at the Oldham Road junctions with Drake Street and Wood Street.

5.12 Improvements are also proposed at Town head junction to reduce congestion at this junction and support the Town Centre East development.
5.13 The introduction of all the new town centre developments will create a change in pedestrian movements. In particular the new Municipal Offices, Bus Station, Metrolink Station and Town Centre East developments will increase pedestrian flow across Smith Street giving it a more pedestrian friendly feel and contributing towards reducing the number of vehicles travelling along Smith Street and onto South Parade.

South Parade

5.14 When considering highway movements on South Parade during the period of the Town centre development it is thought that due to the nature and phasing of the temporary traffic management, opportunities for general traffic to be able to use South Parade will be severely limited.

5.15 Highway works on Drake Street, Smith Street and Constantine Road will limit access for westbound traffic onto South Parade and provide a no through road for all eastbound vehicles on South Parade except for buses. It is thought that the existing vehicular restrictions on South Parade will remain for the foreseeable future.

5.16 When all the developments are complete, access to South Parade will need to be extended to service vehicles exiting Yorkshire Street and Baillie Street or servicing the Wheatsheaf Centre and Smith Street. However time restrictions can be implemented on these movements to reduce any potential negative impact these movements will have on South Parade during peak times. The proposed signals at Drake Street/ Smith Street will discourage any unnecessary through movements from Yorkshire Street and Baillie Street.

5.17 A number of proposed measures and future traffic conditions would discourage general traffic to rat run along South Parade from Smith Street, these measures would include.

- Introduction of new “people friendly” streetscapes and traffic calming that gives priority to pedestrians and sends the message to general traffic drivers that they are secondary users (this approach will also be used on Smith Street).
- Introduction of traffic signals at the junction of Drake Street/ Smith Street giving more priority to pedestrians and the Metrolink therefore increasing vehicular journey times along Smith Street/ South Parade.
- Increased numbers of pedestrian traffic crossing Smith Street travelling between the new Municipal offices, Bus Station and Town Centre East shopping development will also make it a less attractive through route for general traffic wishing to access South Parade.
- The removal of legal and physical through routes that can be accessed due to new “Bus/ Metrolink” only Traffic Regulation Orders on Drake Street and road closures on Baillie Street.
- The removal of the Bus Station car park and therefore the demand for general traffic to access it via Smith Street.
- The closure of the Penn Street ‘through route’ that currently allows rat running through the town centre.
5.18 Further measures could be considered if there is still evidence of general traffic traveling along Smith Street and South Parade in sufficient numbers when all the development is complete.

5.19 Estimated existing hourly two-way traffic flows currently using South Parade are;
   AM Peak 197
   PM Peak 222
   After the town centre developments it is anticipated that these figures will reduce to;
   AM Peak 79
   PM Peak 88

5.20 Accident statistics on South Parade indicate 4 ‘slight’ accidents over the past 3 years, the anticipated lower traffic flows on South Parade post-development should improve road safety by reducing these figures further.

Future servicing arrangements

5.21 Due to the developments redefining the nature of the major roads within the town centre, the future servicing of the town centre needs to allow access where required to facilitate servicing of shops and business whilst providing access to buses, Metrolink, taxi’s and community transport. Provision and access to parking has also been considered.

The future servicing arrangements will be as follows;

- Buses will utilise South Parade, Smith Street (one way westbound), Drake Street (one way southbound), Water Street, River Street and Faulkner Street to assess and egress the new bus station.
- Access to the loading areas of the Wheatsheaf, Yorkshire Street, Baillie Street, Drake Street and Stationers Entry will be maintained along with the proposed servicing of the Town Centre East development from Constantine Road.
- General vehicular access into the town centre will be limited for general traffic but access to car parks will be maintained.
- Through traffic will be eliminated for west to east movements and thoroughly discouraged for east to west using the measures described above.

6. Personnel Implications:

None.

7. Financial Implications:

None.
8. Conclusions:

8.1 The overall vision on completion of the town centre development in 2015 is as follows;

8.2 On South Parade the desire is to remove all vehicle movements however access is still required for servicing, bus movements and Taxis only.

8.3 Smith Street will remain one way west bound from its junction with Milton Street to its junction with Drake Street.

8.4 Drake Street will be one way buses only south west bound from Smith Street to Water Street. From Water Street onwards, Drake Street will be open to general two way traffic.

8.5 Baillie Street will be pedestrianised and closed to through traffic with a new vehicular access road connecting Penn Street to John Street constructed as part of the Town Centre East retail development.

8.6 Wood Street Ring Road will relieving traffic congestion at the Oldham Road junctions with Drake Street and Wood Street. Improvements will be made to the Town head junction to also increase the efficiency of traffic flow on the ring road.

8.7 Emphasis should be placed on the fact that information outlined in this report could change due to it being based on a number of future development proposals.

For further information and background papers: For further information about this report or access to any background papers please contact Dave Stewart 01706 924608

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